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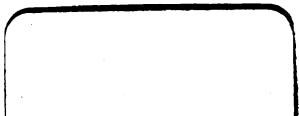




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# STUDIES IN PHILOLOGY

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF  
THE PHILOLOGICAL CLUB OF THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTH CAROLINA

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VOLUME VIII

## A MIDDLE ENGLISH TREATISE ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

EDITED WITH NOTES AND AN INTRODUCTION  
BY  
JAMES FINCH ROYSTER

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### PART II—INTRODUCTION

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## A MIDDLE ENGLISH TREATISE ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

(From St. John's College Oxford MS. 94. 1420-1434)

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### PART II—INTRODUCTION

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CHAPEL HILL  
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

1911

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## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

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In the deed of gift of his book to Roger Stonysdale, one of the chantry priests of St. Nicholas' Church at Newcastle-upon-Tyne (p. 9), the scribe calls it "hoc primarium." In

I. contents Lacy's "primarium" agrees with the **THE PRYMER.** service book commonly known as the **Prymer.** Mr. Littelhales<sup>2</sup> gives the following table of con-

tents for the **Prymer**, the one met with in a large number of **mss.** examined by him: 1) Hours of the Blessed Virgin, 2) Seven Penitential Psalms, 3) Fifteen Gradual Psalms, 4) Litany, 5) Office of the Dead, 6) Commendations. This matter the **Prymer** invariably contains. In addition to these offices, many copies of the **Prymer** have various other devotions and forms of religious instruction not included in the original plan of the book. There is no absolute uniformity regulating what this matter shall be, but it is usually those things which the Church thought it incumbent upon the laity to know: the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Seven Deadly Sins, the Seven Sacraments, etc. to which there are often added tracts on various subjects. In the "primarium" described here the added matter, except the translation of St. Jerome's Epistle *Ad Demetriadem*, is that commonly found in the **Prymers**.

Later the **Prymer** came to be not so much a book of monastic devotion as a book of religious instruction for the people—"the prayer book of the educated laity."<sup>3</sup> The compiler of this **Primarium** was not, however, making a service book for the use of the people.

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<sup>1</sup> For a description of the **mss.** see pp. 5-7.

<sup>2</sup> *The Prymer, or Lay Folks Mass Book*, Pt. II, pp. xxxix, EETS. Cf. Maskell, *Mon. Rit. Eccles. Angl.* 1846, III; Littelhales, H., *The Prymer of the Lay People in the Middle Ages*. For a summary of the bibliography of the **Prymer** cf. Brown, C. F., *Modern Philology*, III, p. 481, note.

<sup>3</sup> The **Prymer** was early translated into English for the benefit of those who did not understand Latin. Cf. Swete, H., *Services and Service Books*, pp. 112-113; Brown, *loc. cit.*, p. 481.

He compiled it for his own use, (fol. 101 b., p. 9), "and aftur to oþur in exitynge hem to devocion and preyers to god," and wills it to a chantry priest of his own town to be kept perpetually in St. Nicholas' Church.

The Primarium was begun as early as 1420 and completed, at the latest, by the year 1434. On fol. 16 b., col. 1, there is a half

page miniature of one imprisoned praying to the

II. THE DATE. Virgin ; the prisoner holds a flowing scroll containing writing, the greater part of which has been erased ; under this scroll is the date M.CCCCXX. On fol. 1 ("in fronte codicis") we find, "Anno domini milesimo. CCCC mo xxxiiij." The year 1434 may rightly be taken as the extreme date for the completion of the ms. The composition may well have extended over a period of fourteen years.

Friar John Lacy, a member of the order of Friars Preachers, dwelling at Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the first half of the 15th century

was the compiler of the Primarium. This much

III. information concerning the writer the manuscript

THE SCRIBE. itself gives us : On fol. 1 he speaks of himself as

"Iohannis lacy anachorite de ordine fratrum predicatorum noui Castri super Tynam" ; on fol. 101 as "frere Ion lacy Anchor, and Reclused in þe new castel upon tynde" ; on fol. 16 b., we find "xþe lacy" ; at the bottom of fol. 17, "Lacy scripsit et illuminat" ; and on fol. 151, the name "Lacy."

To these meagre items of biography I am able to add nothing of consequence.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Welford<sup>2</sup> notes that "a John Lacy is mentioned

<sup>1</sup> There is no mention of John Lacy in the series of articles on the Black Friars in England in the *Reliquary*, 76-89 ; in the *Archeological Journal*, 1880-1884 ; Quétif and Echard, *Scriptores ordinis praedicatorum* ; Brand's *History of Newcastle* ; Tanner's *Bibliotheca* ; Jöcher's *Allgemeines Gelehrter Lexicon* ; Bale's *Index* ; or in any of the books of the kind available. Miss L. Toulmin Smith has kindly aided me in my search for any notice of this mediaeval penman—unfortunately without result. Miss Smith informs me that a certain John Lacy held an office in the port of London in 1423. Clearly this is another man. The name Lacy was a common one, especially in the North of England.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. Ad.*, series III, 80. Cf. also Welford, *Newcastle and Gateshead*, I, 292.

in a deed of January 2nd, 1432 as one of the executors of the will of Richard Clederhowe" of Newcastle. The identification of this John Lacy with the John Lacy of the *Prymer* is not excluded by the fact that he was at the same time a Dominican Friar and the testator of a will, for the probation of wills fell within the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts, and was one of the powers of the church tribunal against which the people at this time most loudly complained.<sup>1</sup> This bare piece of information does not, however, aid us in determining how far Lacy resembled the Friar of Chaucer's *Prologue*, or in allowing us to judge whether he was one who deserved the strictures passed upon the Friars by the author, or authors, of *Piers the Plowman*. There is no evidence to inform us whether or not he was a typical member of his order, who made his way over his circuit granting absolution for "a pair of old shoes and a dinner," who knew how to cozen the women and make himself "biloved and famulier . . . with frankelyns over-al in his contree."

The indications in the ms. that John Lacy copied the TREATISE ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS into his *Primarium* rather than composed it are many.<sup>2</sup> Every page gives evidence of errors

IV. made in copying and corrections inserted in revision. No other version of the same treatment of the ten commandments exists in Middle English, so far as I know, and no original from which Lacy copied has yet been printed. There can be, under the circumstances, no speculation as to the identity of the author. Any well meaning priest might have written the treatise.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Trevelyan, G. M., *England in the Age of Wycliffe*, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> For instance: p. 9, ll. 21, 22, 24; p. 11, l. 35; p. 14, l. 2; p. 19, l. 10; p. 24, l. 10; p. 25, l. 28; p. 32, ll. 1, 28, etc. For a description of the ms. see pp. 5-7.

<sup>3</sup> Without being tempted into an effort to reconstruct the original or to assign different parts of the composition to the author and to the scribe, I am inclined to believe that the scribe added the story of the unforgiving slandered woman (p. 12) to his original. In the first place, the position of the narrative suggests this possibility. It comes at the end of the "prologus" and is separated from the discussion of the first commandment by two lines of Latin, a convenient place for the insertion of original matter. There is no correction of or addition to the text in the column in which this narrative stands. The spirit and vividness with

Tracts on the Decalogue, containing a systematized condemnation of all sins, with directions for righteous living,<sup>1</sup> were an exceedingly popular form of the clerical literature of the Middle Ages.

V. In the Sermon of Dan Jon Gaytrye<sup>2</sup> THE TREATISE we read : “*þe law to knawe God Almyghty, on the ten þat principally may be schewed in theis sexe COMMANDMENTS. thynges*”—the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Seven Works of Mercy, the Seven Deadly Sins, the Seven Virtues, and the Fourteen Points of Faith. During the years when Lacy was compiling his *Prymer*, “when the Wycliffite movement was at death grips with the Catholic church,” discourses upon any other subjects but those mentioned above were forbidden by the *Primat.*<sup>3</sup>

The exposition in these treatises invariably takes this form. There is a prologue<sup>4</sup>—of varying length—concerning the origin of the commandments, showing why they should be kept. The commandments follow in order. Under each commandment are mentioned the manifold ways in which this particular mandate of God is broken,—the various forms of *sin* especially condemned by this commandment. The discourse concludes with an exhortation, or a threat, to keep the laws of God. In all of the Middle English expositions of the commandments I have been able to examine, the same plan is followed. Both the subject matter and the form are the common property of mediaeval religious literature, and have their ultimate source in *Holy Writ* and the writings of the Fathers. The phrasing became stereotyped and the expression formalized.

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which the story is told is wanting in the rest of the composition. That a copier or translator felt at perfect liberty to insert *exempla* of his own into his original is shown in the treatment to which Robert of Brunne subjected William of Waddington's *Manuel des Pechez*. Crane, *Exempla of Jacques de Vitry*, cites the examples of Bernadius of Milan in his *Rosarium sermonum praedicabilium*, and Gottschalk Hollem in his *Sermones super Epistolas Pauli*.

<sup>1</sup> “*Bokes whiche shewe us the way of godly lyvynge, and soulys heith.*”—Barclay, *Ship of Fools*. For a Reformation complaint as to the excessive number of such books cf. Gau, *Kingdom of Heuine*, p. 3, STS

<sup>2</sup> Perry, *Religious Pieces*, p. 2, EETS.

<sup>3</sup> Treveleyan, *loc. cit.*, p. 127, quoting Wilkins, III, 56 and Gibson, I, 382-4.

<sup>4</sup> Cf., for instance, Hugo of St. Victor, *De Sacramentis*. Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, CXL.

In neither subject matter nor form does this treatise depart from the conventional mode of treatment. Every thought, and almost every phrase, can be paralleled by passages from other

**VI. SOURCE.** theological discourses. But the relation between this version and any other tract on the Ten Commandments known to me is not close enough, by a great deal, to lead to a conclusion that this treatise is a copy of any Middle English tract so far published ; nor do I know of any Latin original which can be held responsible. Rather than a slavish copy it seems to be a free rendering, in conventional form and style, of matter common to theological literature. The fashion is consistently followed throughout. The text is thoroughly supplied with reference and quotation from the Bible and the Fathers to indicate the sources of the material.

A separate tract on the Seven Deadly Sins, or any detailed treatment of them, is lacking. These sins are, however, enumerated under

**VII.** a separate heading in the same way that the Ten Commandments, the Five Wits, the Seven Deeds of Mercy, etc. are catalogued (fol. 126 b.). It may have been the intention of the scribe to let this list serve as an index for other tracts to follow. At the end of these lists there is a break in the ms. ; but the translation of St. Jerome's Epistle is taken up in the next section.

Earlier, in the TREATISE ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, the Seven Deadly Sins personified are introduced in company with those who break the Sabbath by drinking, gambling, and other sins of gluttony. A merry party of gluttons and "wasters of mens sustenance" is assembled for pleasure. The Seven Deadly Sins enter and make merry with the company. Each sin is in his usual habit. Pride is a boaster and hypocrite ; Covetousness, full of oaths, causes each one to beguile the other ; Lechery relates ribald stories ; Gluttony, the "Stuard" of the household, will allow no one to go home until he is fully satisfied with food and drink ; Sloth, the "Marchel" of the hall, bringing Idleness with him, keeps the cup always full ; Wrath, the "Tresureer," having Envy in his com-

pany, makes up the accounts and warns them all that no one shall speak well of his neighbor.<sup>1</sup>

In the books of medieval theological writers the Seven Deadly Sins had been made to assume almost every conceivable allegorical shape ; they had been personified under almost every form that can be thought of.<sup>2</sup> From the days of Prudentius the battle between the Vices and the Virtues had been raging.<sup>3</sup> A very common form which this strife-allegory assumed is that of a castle inhabited and defended by the Virtues, and attacked by the Seven Deadly Sins.<sup>4</sup> A closely related form of the allegory is that found in the earlier *Sowles Warde* and in the *Abbey of the Holy Ghost*.<sup>5</sup> In the *Abbey* a religious house is built on Conscience, erected by Obedience and Mercy, and founded upon Patience and Strength ; the Holy Ghost is the Visitor ; Wisdom and Discretion, Penance and Temperance are the officers. A tyrant of the land stormed the Abbey and put his four daughters—Envy, Pride, Grudging, and Evil-Thinking—into possession. But their rule was brief, for the Visitor soon came and expelled the usurpers.

While we do not have the allegory in the TREATISE ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS completely worked out, there is enough of it to suggest that the writer had in mind a reversed form of the “household

<sup>1</sup> For a neatly tabulated survey of the conventional characteristics of the Seven Deadly Sins see Mlle. Fowler, *Une Source Française du Poème de Gower*, Menton, 1905, pp. 58 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Triggs, O. L., *Assembly of Gods*, pp. lxix ff. To his list of the occurrences of the Seven Deadly Sins in Middle English literature may be added these examples : *Townley Mysteries*, 377, 306, 331 ; *Digby Plays*, 66 ; *Englische Studien*, ix., 43 ; Perry, *Religious Pieces*, 77 ; *Cursor Mundi*, v., 1524 ; *Reliquiae Antiquiae*, 136, 280 ; William of Shoreham, 98, 28, 102, 107 ; R. of Brunne, i., 105 ; Myrc, *Parish Priests*, 31 ; Dunbar, *Dance of Seven Deadly Sins* ; Lydgate, *Temple of Glas*, 20 ; *Chester Plays*, 207 ; Vernon MS., i., 243. For Latin tracts on the Seven Deadly Sins see Append. ad S. Augustinum, Migne, xl. ; *Vitii octo*, S. Eutropius, Migne, lxxx., 9 ; *Vit. octo Princip.*, Aldhelmus, lxxxix., 28 ; *Vit. et Virtutibus*, Rabanus Maurus, Migne, cxii. ; *Vit. et Virt.*, Hugo of S. Victor, Migne, clxxvi., 525 ; Petrus Cantor, Migne, cov., 44.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Neilson, W. A., “Origins and Sources of the Court of Love,” *Harvard Studies and Notes*, Vol. vi., p. 19. Triggs, *loc. cit.*, pp. lxiii ff.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the “Castle of Perseverance”; Grosseteste’s “Castle of Love”; Neilson, *loc. cit.*, ch. III, *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> Perry, *Relig. Pieces*, pp. 48 ff., EETS.

allegory." Taking the place of the House of God, or the Castle of Love, as the residence of the Virtues, is the Tavern, the stronghold of the Vices. Of this household the Seven Deadly Sins are the rightful officers : Gluttony, the "Stuard" ; Sloth, the "Marchel" ; Wrath, the "Tresureer." But the strife motive is lacking ; there are no forces opposed to the Vices.

To the mind of the devout man of religion of the time there could be no fitter castle of wickedness than the tavern. By the Church it was considered the home and breeding-place of all sin.<sup>1</sup> Among the theological writers it is often characterized as the "devil's school-house." Don Michel,<sup>2</sup> following his source,<sup>3</sup> says :

"*þe tauerne ys þe scole of þe dyeule huere his deciples studieth. and his oxene chapele þer huer me deþ his seruese. and þer huer he makeþ his miracles zuiche ase behouþ to þe dyeule. At cherche kan god his uirtues sseawy. and do his miracles. þe blynde : to ligte. þe crokede : to rigte. yelde þe wyttes of þe wode. þe speche : to þe dombe. þe hierþe : to þe dyaue. Ac þe dyeuel deþ al ayenward ine þe tauerne. Vor huanne þe glotoun geþ in to þe tauerne ha geþ oprigt. huanne he comp a-yen : he ne heþ uot þet him moȝe sostyeni ne bere. Huanne he þer-in geþ : he y-zycþ and y-herþ and specþ wel and onderstant. huan he comp ayen : he heþ al pis uorlore as þe ilke pet ne heþ wyt ne scele ne onderstondinge. Zuyche byeþ þe miracles pet þe dyeuel makeþ. And huet lessouns þer he ret. Alle uelþe he tekþ þer. glotounye. lecherie. zuerie. uorzuerie. lyege. missigge. reneye god. euele telle. contacky. and to ueele oper manyeres of zennes. þer ariseþ þe cheastes. þe strifs. þe manslagges. þer me tekþ to stele : and to hongi. þe tauerne is a dich to pieues. and þe dyeules castel uor to werri god an his halgen. and þo pet þe tauernes sustyeneþ : byeþ uelages of alle þe zennen pet byeþ y-do ine hare tauernes. and uor zoþe yef me ham zede oper dede asemochē ssame to hire uader oper to hare moder. oper to hare gromes. as me deþ to hire uader of heuene. and to oure lheuedy. and to þe halgen of paradis. mochel hi wolden ham wrepi. and oper red hi wolden do þer to panne hi dop.*"

<sup>1</sup> Chaucer's Friar, however, "knew the tavernes wel in every toun." *Prol.*, 240.

<sup>2</sup> *Agenbite of Invit*, pp. 56-7, EETS. Cf. Jusserand, J. J., *English Wayfaring Life*, pp. 130 ff. Cf. Chaucer's "develes temple," *Pardoners Tale*, 8.

<sup>3</sup> Fowler, *loc. cit.*, p. 96.

The anonymous author of *Jacob's Well*<sup>1</sup> speaks thus of the tavern : “*þe tauerne is welle of glotonye, for it may be clepyd þe develys scolehous & þe devyls chapel for there his dycy whole stondyen & syngen bothe day & nyȝt.*”

Robert Crawley, writing more than a hundred and fifty years later, continues the condemnation :<sup>2</sup>

“And then such as loue not  
to hear theyr fautes tolde,  
By the minister that readeth  
the new Testament and olde  
do turne into the alehouse  
and let the church go.”

The sins appear in the following order: Pride, Covetousness, Lechery, Gluttony, Sloth, Wrath, and Envy. This sequence differs from that found in Chaucer, Gower, *Agen. of Inwȝt*, Gregory, or from that in Augustine. All agree, however, in placing Pride first in the list.<sup>3</sup>

Only a limited use is made of *exempla* for illustrating the lessons taught. We find but five tales. Three of these are versions of widely-scattered stories, one is related on the VIII. EXEMPLA. authority of oral transmission, and another is said to be taken from an author whom I have not succeeded in identifying. The sources indicated by the writer are: *Vitae Patrum*, Gregory's *Dialogues*, and “*Vincencius in Gestis Anglorum.*”<sup>4</sup>

I. (p. 12.) A young man slandered a young woman. She bore him such resentment for his evil speech that she would not forgive him, even when at the point of death she was strongly urged and threatened by the priest. She died without the holy sacrament. Her spirit afterwards appeared to the man who had slandered her, while he was tethering his horse, and told him that she had been damned

<sup>1</sup> p. 147, EETS.

<sup>2</sup> *Works of Robert Crawley*, ed. Cowper, p. 89, “Of Alehouses,” EETS.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Triggs, *loc. cit.*, p. lxxii.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Bale's *Index*, p. 514. The title there recorded, *Gesta Anglorum*, I have been able to trace no further.

for his sake, but that he still had time while alive to obtain forgiveness and mercy. There was no remedy for her. The priest was sent for to conjure her to some "dry place." The spirit disappeared.

The tale is related upon the authority of an acquaintance, a man of "perfection and credens." This indication of source may, or may not, be true. We must give it consideration when we remember that it was a common custom among the *exempla* writers to add stories of local tradition and sometimes of local happenings to their collections.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, we should bear in mind the fact that the scribe acknowledges that he has read the other stories, and that search after parallels for this one has been in vain. On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that it was a convention to relate a story on the authority of oral transmission in order to make it more realistic, and to give it a readier acceptance.<sup>2</sup>

The separate parts of which the story is made up are stock motives. The moral, which is to show the virtue of the shrift and the peril of dying unabsolved, can be illustrated by innumerable *exempla*.<sup>3</sup> The appearance of the spirit of one who died unconfessed to warn others is, of course, a commonplace. The handling of the slander motive is unusual. Generally the slanderer is punished.

II. (p. 15.) The second story is related in fewer than fifty words. A Jew was saved from the power of wicked spirite by making the sign of the cross.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Jacques de Vitry*, ed. C. F. Crane (Folk Lore Soc.), Introduction, pp. lxvii, lxviii, lxxii, xcvi. Gregory, in his *Dialogues*, is very careful to strengthen the authority of his anecdotes by citing the authority of those who were eyewitnesses, if he himself did not see them. Robert of Brunne vouches for the authenticity of his stories as follows :

"Meruels, some as y fonde wrytyn,  
And other that have be seyn & wetyn ;  
Non ben thare-yn, more ne lesse  
But that y-founde wryte, or had wytnesse."

<sup>2</sup> In the *Niederlandische Sagen* (ed. Wolf, p. 54), a comparatively late collection, the brother-in-law of the knight, the chief person in the story, is cited as authority. But the same tale had been told by Caesarius of Heisterbach. Examples of this kind can be piled up almost indefinitely.

<sup>3</sup> To cite only one or two examples, cf. *Jacob's Well*, pp. 21, 183; Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, v, xiii. In a large number of instances the Virgin appears and intercedes.

The source is plainly stated to be Gregory's *Dialogues*. It is found in Bk. III, ch. 7 (Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, LXXVII, col. 229). Gregory relates the incident in the following manner: A certain bishop, Andreas of Fulda, an old man full of virtue and good deeds, became tempted by a holy woman who was dwelling in his house. A Jew passing through this city was unable to find a lodging for the night, and made his bed in a temple of Apollo. Fearing the sacredness of the place, he decided to protect himself by making the sign of the cross, though, in reality, he held its power as little. In the middle of the night he woke and saw a strange sight. An assembly of evil spirits was being questioned by their master as to the wicked deeds they had been doing. One related that he had poisoned the mind of Bishop Andreas for the holy woman. Suddenly the spirits were ordered by their master to seek about the temple to find one who did not belong to their order. They soon came upon the Jew, but the sign of the cross was upon him. The devils retired, saying, "Vae, Vae, vas vacuum et signatum." The Jew ran to the bishop and told him what he had seen. He became a Christian, and the bishop put away the woman.

The same tale is found in *J. de Vit.* (cxxxi), *El Libro de los Enexemplos* (xxi), *Alph. of T.* (ccxxviii) and in *Hand. Synne* (Rox. Club), p. 124.

In *El Lib. de los Enx.*, there are two versions of the story; these are practically the same, except that the second one is considerably fuller in detail. The first version, following faithfully Gregory, concludes: "Ella manera desta inquisicion brevement la dice San Gregorio; mas püedese saber mas largament por un enexmplo que se ley en las Vidas de los santos Padres." However, nothing new is added.

The story has taken on additions in *Handlyng Synne*, while Jacques de Vitry has cut it to a considerable extent. It is faithfully reproduced in *An Alphabet of Tales*. Odo of Cheriton (no. 182) also relates this story. For further bibliography, cf. *J. de Vit.* (ed. Crane), pp. 189-90.

III. (p. 18.) A clerk was greatly devoted to the Virgin, but he was accustomed to use vicious oaths. Our Lady, nevertheless, prayed

to her Son that he might be saved. One day she appeared before the clerk as he was in his devotions, with her child in her arms. His eyes were hanging on his cheeks, his arms and bones were broken, his flesh was rent, and his heart was torn out of his body. The clerk inquired of her who had thus mangled her Child. He was told that he was one of those who had thus injured him. She disappeared. The clerk mended his ways and made a good end.

No source is indicated by the author. He merely says : “ We reden of a miracul of oure lady.” In none of the large collections described and analyzed by Mussafia (*Sitzungsberichte der Wiener Academie*, 113, 115, 119, 123) or by Ward (*Cat. of Rom. in Brit. Mus.*, II), is this story found. It belongs, however, to a class of Mary legends very common, which may be called “ Mary intervention exempla.” Where this exact version comes from I do not know.

With some variation the story is told in *Handlyng Synne* (EETS, Pt. I, pp. 25 ff.). This is an addition on the part of the English translator ; it is not in William of Waddington’s *Manuel des Pechez*. Dr. Furnivall has not traced the borrowing. The two versions differ in these particulars. In *Hand. Synne* the swearer is not a clerk, but “ a ryche man ” ; the Virgin appears to him in the same manner with her wounded Child in her arms, but the conversation between her and the clerk is given at greater length. Mary promises to intercede for him if he will repent and do penance.

IV. (p. 19.) Sir Robert of Worcester was a good and charitable man, but he was a hard swearer ; his favorite oath was by “ godes spere,” or by the “ spere of god.” After his death a good man prayed continually for his soul. An angel appeared to this man and informed him that it was not the will of God that he should pray for the soul of such a wicked man as the knight had been, for he was damned. Then the angel led him to a “ place of paynes,” where there was a great pit of fire, in which the knight lay burning. A devil was smiting him with a great spear. The angel disappeared.

Vicencius in *Gestis Anglorum* is given as the source. I have found no notice of a Vicencius who wrote a *Gesta Anglorum*.<sup>1</sup> Bede’s

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. x, note 4.

*Ecclesiastical History* is usually referred to as *Gesta Anglorum*, but Bede has not told this narrative. The possibility suggested itself that this might be a loose and careless reference to Vincent of Beauvais, for in the *Speculum Historiale*, Bks. xxiii to xxx, he tells of the deeds of the English and French kings. The tale is not, however, found in this section of the book, and, apparently, nowhere else in the volume. Furthermore, William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum* is referred to by *exempla* writers as *Gesta Anglorum* (*Cat. of Rom. in Brit. Mus.* III, ed. J. A. Herbert, 1910, p. 511 and p. 536). But the story of Sir Robert of Worcester is not found in William of Malmesbury's history. The careless way in which "in Gestis Anglorum" is used seems to indicate that the term might be applied to any book or portion of a book concerned with English history.

There are no other occurrences of the legend known to me. The two motives of which the story is composed are frequently found. It is related in the *Alphabet of Tales*, (no. 305) that a man was virtuous in every way, except that he used "fowle language"; his punishment was, however, different from that accorded to Sir Robert: his body was cut in two. The futility of praying for unredeemably damned souls is also illustrated by a story in the same collection (no. 291), taken from Jacques de Vitry (736, p. 492), who had it from Caesarius of Heisterbach. The vision of hell and the sight of the punished is a commonplace in *exempla*. Cf. Ward, *Cat. of Rom. in Brit. Mus.*; Becker, E. J., *Mediaeval Visions of Heaven and Hell*, Baltimore, 1899.

V. In the *Tract on Confession*, not printed in the following text, is related the story of the two brothers and the book of three leaves. The older of the two brothers was a clerk, the younger a "lewd" man. The clerk was proud and impatient, while the lowly brother was meek and well liked by all who knew him. The clerk inquired of his brother how he had attained the virtue of patience and humility. He was told that it came through the reading of a wonderful book of three leaves; the first leaf was written in letters of gold, the second in letters of red, the third in letters of black. On the black leaf he found his sins, on the red the poverty, suffering and meekness of

Jesus, and on the gold the joys of paradise. When he had finished the reading in this order he despised himself and the world.

The *Vitae Patrum* is named as the source ; but, apparently, it is not in the text printed by Migne, *Pat. Lat.* vols. 73, 74. It is well known that the writers of *exempla* often confused the sources which they used, and sometimes wilfully misrepresented them in their desire for a worthy source.<sup>1</sup> If the tale, however, is not to be found in the *Vitae Patrum*, it is one of the most popular and often repeated stories of the *exempla* books. It is in the *Gesta Romanorum* (ed. Oesterly, no. 188), but the English translator has omitted it. (Cf. *Gesta Romanorum*, ed. Hertage, EETS, Append. p. 531.) Wright early published the story without comment (Percy Soc., viii). For further bibliography cf. Oesterly, p. 742. Oesterly believes it to be related to the story of the three crows (*Gesta Roman.*, no. 125), and cites here Byrom's *Three Black Crows* (Chalmers' Poets, xv), of which he probably read only the title.

The task of arriving at any definite conclusions as to the language of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne district at the end of the first quarter of the fifteenth century through the evidence furnished

IX. by the present text is made quite impossible by the  
LANGUAGE. fact that Lacy's ms. is a copy, by the absence of opportunity for making rime tests and by the really small amount of exact information we possess in regard to the language of this district at this time. The more or less mechanical record of the writings of the more common sounds found in this text will at any rate, it is hoped, be of some value to future investigators of the language of the northmost part of England in the early years of the fifteenth century.

#### VOWELS.

The forms in which OE *a* (WG *a*, WS *æ*), *e*, *i*, *ī*, *o*, *ō*, *u*, *ū*, *eo* appear in this text follow the usual ME developments and present little of interest. The following observations are to be noted :—

OE *a* (*æ*) before nasals = *a*, *ā* (written *a*, *aa*) : *man*, *þan*, *name*, etc. ; before nasal combinations = both *a* and *o* : *landes*, *londes* ;

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Crosland, *Modern Language Review*, I, i, 57.

*wrange, wrongesly; honde, hoonde, handes, etc.* Although early Southern ME employed generally the *o* in this case in contrast to the early Northern *a*, neither form at this late period furnishes a dialectic criterion. The London Records of this date have both *a* and *o* (Morsbach, *Über den Ursprung der Neuenglischen Schriftsprache*, S. 28; Lekebusch, *Die Londoner Urkundensprache von 1430-1500*, S. 51); while the same orthographic variation is common in the *Townley Mysteries*, *Thomas of Erceldoune*, Richard Rolle and in other Northern texts. Cf. Baumann, *York Urkunden*, S. 16.

In *fache* and *brannyng*, OE *e* appears as *a*. Cf. Sievers, *Grammatik*, 89. Anm. 1; Morsbach, *Schriftsprache*, 59; Baumann, *Y. Urk.*, 21. Anm.

ON *gar* is found once, written *gar*.

*i* (written *i* and *y*) changes with *e* in *whet* (*withe*), *wethe*, *binemith*, *het*, *wreten*, *sengel*, *wedue*. Luik (*Untersuchung zur eng. Lautlehre*, 209) takes this variation for a lengthening to *e*. It seems to be, however, more a matter of writing than one of sound. It is an orthographic variation extremely common in MSS. of this date. Cf. *Englische Studien*, 27, 352; Herrig's *Archiv*, 102, 43; Morsbach, *Mittelenglische Grammatik*, 65. In *bedraden* OE *i* = *a* (through *e*?).

The writing *a* for *e* < OE *eo*, breaking before *h*, *r* and *l* + a consonant is not found. For the usual *e* we have *o* in *world*. OE *zeong* (*eo* through palatalization) appears as both *zeng* and *zing*. According to Kölbing (*Sir Tristam*, p. xxxi) the last form is Northern. Cf. ten Brink, *Anglia*, 1, 520.

OE *y* is generally written *i*, *y*, as in *furste*, *chirche*, *wyrkyng*, *mynde*, *kynd*, etc. In *mekel*, *evyle* it occurs as *e*. This original Southern writing was not unknown to Northern scribes. R. Rolle has these two words in the same forms. Cf. Kölbing, *Sir Tristam*, p. lxx. It is written *u* in *hud*, *putt* (noun), *cussynges* and *-schupe*. This is another instance of an original Southern form that had ceased to be confined to the Southern district. The London orthography of the day as noted by Morsbach (*Grammatik*, 8; *Schriftsprache*, 38), employs usually *i*, sometimes *e* and here and there *u*. *An Alphabet of Tales* (ms. Northern, fifteenth century) shows a great fondness for the forms in *u*: *furste*, *hur*, *churche*, etc. In *Cursor Mundi* (Add. ms. B. M. 10,036) there are occasional occurrences of the *u*-writing.

WS *ea* 1) breaking before *l + d* (Northern *a*. Sievers, *Grammatik*, 151, 3) is found as both *a* and *o* in the same word: *halde, holden, withholdes, withholdes* (*old* : *ald* : 6 : 2). Chaucer has here only *o* (ten Brink, *Sprache*, 35); the London Documents generally *o*, beside a few forms in *a*. The forms in *o* are not, however, unknown in the North as early as the fourteenth century. 2) breaking before *h + a* consonant = *aw, au* : *laugen, sawze, sauge*. The decisive Northern *a* (Kaluza, *Historische Grammatik der englischen Sprache*, II, 23) is not found.

OE *ā* = both *ā* and *ō* : *haly, holy; mare, more*; etc. Variant forms occur in the same line. The *ō* (*oo*) forms predominate in almost the proportion of two to one. The word *haly* furnishes by far the largest number of examples of the *a*-form,—twenty-nine (*holy*, eighteen). The preservation of OE *ā* is one of the most decisive Northern characteristics. The Southern and Midland change OE *ā* to *ō*. *An Alphabet of Tales* and the *North English Cato Version* (*Englische Studien*, 36. ms. fifteenth century) exhibit the same variation of spelling that we find here. Professor Hempl (*Journal of Germanic Philology*, 1, 22) very properly doubts “to what extent Southernly Northern texts with *ō* represent a real *ō* or only a Southern spelling for *ā*.” The occurrence of the *o*-form in a far Northern text is probably always a matter of orthography rather than one of pronunciation. Though the scribe write the two forms, we cannot postulate two pronunciations differing so widely as *ō* and *ā* in the mouth of the same man at the same time. The writer who uses two forms of spelling for the same word, or for the same sounds in different words is copying from an original with a different spelling representing a different pronunciation from that of his own usage—traces of which he allows to remain in his transcription; or a standard of spelling, to a large degree arbitrary, forces an unphonetic spelling upon him; or lastly the lack of a standard orthography allows him to represent a sound in almost any manner he chooses.

WS *ǣ* (Mercian and Northern *ǣ* and *ē*, WG *ā*, Germ *ē*) = *ē* and *ā* : *reden, teches, were, weren*; and *ladde, latte*.

WS *ǣ* (i-umlaut of *ā*) = *ē* and *ā* : *redi, clene*; and *clanes, clannes, gast*.

Dibelius (*John Capgrave und die englische Schriftsprache*) states

that the *a*-forms are the more frequently found in the North and North-Midland, *ē* and *ō* also appearing in nearly all writers of the North-Midland, while *ō* comes into the North first in the fifteenth century through the influence of the Southern poets. Cf. Kaluza, *Historische Grammatik*, II, 27. Lacy's writing shows no *o*-forms. The weakened *i*-form is seen in *ich* and *ilke*.

OE *ēa* = *ē* : *deeth*, *deth*, *deedly*, *gret*, *heed*. *Gratur* and *gratust* each occur once,—forms indicating a shortening of OE *ēa* to *ea*. Cf. Bülbring, *Altenglische Grammatik*, § 344a ; Kaluza, *Historische Grammatik*, II, 29 c ; and Morsbach, *Schriftsprache*, 67. The regular ME development is *a*.

OE *eo* = *ē* : *be*, *frend*, *see*, *fle*, *seek*, etc. In regard to *beoth*, cf. Notes, p. 38.

#### CONSONANTS.

OE palatal *č* = 1) initially *ch* : *child*, *chese*, *chirche* (*kirk* does not appear) ; 2) medially and finally *ch* and *k* : *wilke*, *wiche* (predominating form), *ilk*, *ich*, *mekel* (ON ?), *-miche*, *sekes*, *seches* ; *-lokur*, *-liche* ; *þenken*, *þencceiðh*. The palatalized *ts*-form is by far the more frequent in the scribe's writing. Cf. Kluge, *Pauls Grundriss*, II, 993 ; Morsbach, *Grammatik*, 14 and *Litteraturblatt*, x, 101. ON borrowings do not show the palatalization : *taketh*, *sikurly*.

OE *sc* = 1) *sch* : *flesche* (6 times : *fleshy* once), *worschup* (3 times : *worsup* 2) ; *-che* in *fleche* (once) ; 3) *c* in *englice* (once). Inorganic *sch* appears once in *scheche*. In the auxiliary (OE) *sceal* we find both *sch-* and *s-*, the writing in *s-* having a slight advantage — 42 : 31. *sch-* in Northern texts is not uncommon. R. Rolle writes *sh* (*sch*, *sc*) throughout. *An Alphabet of Tales* and the *Northern English Cato Version* show the same inconsistency between *s-* and *sch-* as we find in this text ; while, on the other hand, a few *s-* forms are to be found in the London documents (Morsbach, *Schriftsprache*, 96). In the York records both *sall* and *shal* are used, the former writing being the more frequently employed (Baumann, *Y. Urk.*, 82).

There is no confusion in the medial position between *d* and the voiced *th*, as far as the writing indicates. Cf. Murray, *Dialects of the Southern Counties of Scotland*, p. 121. Final *d* appears as *t* in *lorte*

once (otherwise *lorde*), in *bousant* and often in the past participle of weak verbs. *t* and *d* interchange in *conforte* and *conforde*. We do not find *sente* for *sende*. Cf. ten Brink, *Sprache*, 170 and Smith, *Specimens of Middle Scots*, xxvii.

Final *t* or *d* of the past participle of weak verbs is often written *th*, as is the final *t* in a large number of words: *wrooth*, *wedethe*, *wethe*, *withe* *renthe*, *feeth*, and also medially: *thougthus*, etc. These are without doubt merely orthographic variants. R. Rolle rimes *Judith*: *writt* : *Judith* : *David* (*Prick of Conscience*, ed. Morris, xxiv). Numerous instances of *th* for *t* without apparent cause may easily be cited.

In one word, *vewe*, OE *f* appears as *v* initially, originally from the East Southern dialect. This *v* was introduced in a few words in the London dialect (Sweet, *Short Historical English Grammar*, 189), and was found once by Morsbach in the London documents (*Schriftsprache*, 103, 158). No instance is known to me of this writing in a pure Northern text. Initial *f* for *þ* is found in *furste*. Cf. Varnhagen, *Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum*, IX, 179. Anm. Note the writing *semfne* for *sefen*.

*ng* is reduced to *n* in *lenthe*, *st(r)enbe*, *everlastanly*, *kyndom* (also *kyngdom*) and in a few past participles. This may be merely graphic; or it may be a reproduction of the pronunciation: *n* for *ŋ*. Murray (*Dialects*, 53, 124, 534) takes the dropping of *g* before *th* as a characteristic of Middle Scotch, "spellings which are found in the Northern dialect since the thirteenth century." Cf. Smith, *Specimens of Middle Scots*, xxv, and Morsbach, *Schriftsprache*, 100, 109. Initial *g* is never written *y*. There is no case of *-cht* for *-gt* or *-gth*.

OE *h* is regularly retained. It is dropped in a few words (*even-kyng*) and is present inorganically in *heerly*.

OE *þ*, *ð* = *th* and *þ*. *th* and *þ* appear side by side. *þ* is more frequently used in pronominal forms. *y* is not written for initial *þ*. Confusion with the voiced *d* medially is not met with.

OE *hw-* = *wh-* and *w-*. The latter writing is the predominating one (33:13). We find *wy*, *wiche*, *wen*, *what*, *whiche*, *when*, etc. The distinctive Northern *qu* does not occur. Intrusive *w* is found several times in *woon* and *wolde* ("old").

## INFLECTIONS.

*Nouns.*

There is no necessity to distinguish between the various declensions of nouns found in the older periods of the language, for with the exception of fewer than ten substantives all nouns in this text are inflected according to the original *a*-masculine declension.

Nom and acc. sing. end in a consonant or in *-e*. OE endings, if there were any have either disappeared or have been reduced to *-e*. Final *e* is irregular and uncertain throughout, and is in no way a consistent index of length.

Gen. sing. ends in *-es*, *-is*, *-ys*, *-us*, the *-es* predominating. The language of the North prefers the ending *is*. The Scottish writers of the fifteenth century employ *-is* throughout. R. Rolle (*Prick of Conscience*) uses generally *es*. *An Alphabet of Tales* has the same variety of usage that we find in Lacy's ms. A remnant of the old weak gen. in *-an* is seen in *hyr husbonde bed*. *Liif dayes* is a compound noun. Cf. *Beowulf*, 793. Chaucer has *lifes dayes*; *Piers Plowman*, *lyf dayes*.

The dat. sing. is not inflected.

All cases of the plural end in *-s*, *-es*, *-is*, *-ys*, *-us* (*-as* once. Cf. ten Brink, *Sprache*, 62). As in the ending of the gen. sing. *-es* is the most frequently employed ending—*-es* : 108 ; *-us* : 45 ; *-is* (*-ys*) 29. *-s* is used in forming the plurals of nouns of Latin or French origin, as *opynions*, *supersticions*, *extorsions*, etc. There are weak plurals in *childeren* (once *childer*), *igen*, *breberen*. *Igen* is a common Northern plural (Murray, *Dialects*, 158-159), but cf. Lekebusch, *Urkundensprache*, 101 ; and Chaucer's frequent *eyen*.

Umlaut plurals are *men*, *women*, *feet*. *Hend* is not used, but *handes*, *hoondes*. OE neuter plurals without ending are *folk* and *bing* (twice ; otherwise *binges*). *Men* has formed a gen. pl. after the analogy of the gen. sing. : *menuis*, *mennes*.

## PRONOUNS.

*Personal pronouns.*

First Per. Sing. Nom. *I* ; Gen. *my* ; Dat. and Acc. *me*. Pl. Nom. *we* ; Gen. *oure*, *owre* ; Dat. Acc. *us*.

Second Per. Sing. Nom. *þou, þow*; Gen. (Possessive Pron.) *bi, þin, þine*; Dat. Acc. *þe*; Pl. Nom. *ȝe, you*; Gen. *ȝowre, ȝoure, ȝuwe* (twice); Dat. Acc. *ȝow*.

Third Per. Masc. Nom. *he*; Gen. *his* (*is* once); Dat. Acc. *him*. Fem. Nom. *echo*; Gen. *hir*; Dat. Acc. *hir, hire*. Neut. Nom. *it, hit, het* (once); Gen. *his*; Dat. Acc. *it*. Pl. all genders, Nom. *þai*; Gen. *þer* (thirteen times); *þeire, þar, þare, þaren, hir*; Dat. Acc. *þam* (forty-one times); *hem* (ten times).

#### *Demonstrative Pronouns.*

Sing. for all cases *þis, þat*. Pl. *þise, þese, þoo, þo*. The Northern forms *þa* and *þas* do not occur.

#### *Relative Pronouns.*

The relative pronoun is represented by the simple *þat*, or by *which(e)* in combination with the article *þe*. *þat* is often appended to this form, the result being *þe whiche þat*. In some instances the relative is omitted. *At* for *þat* is not used. Bokenam, however, has *at* frequently. *Whom* (Acc. Sing.) is used once.

#### *Interrogative Pronouns.*

The following forms are found : *how, hoo, ho, what*.

#### *Adjectives.*

Practically all traces of declension in the adjective have disappeared. *Alle* is the plural in all instances but three. A remnant of an old Gen. Pl. is seen in *allur*.

The comparative ending is *-er, -ur*; the superlative *-st(e), -este, -uste*. The redundant periphrastic superlative is also employed : *moste sikureste*, etc. For the widespread use of this form in the fifteenth century cf. Pound, *The Comparison of Adjectives in the XV and XVI Century*, p. 18.

#### **VERBS**

The infinitive retains the full form in *-en, -yn, on* in thirty-three instances, ends in *-e* in eighty-four and has no trace of the old declension in forty-eight instances.

The 3 sing. pres. indic. generally employs the ending *-eth (-ith(e), -uth)*. The forms in *-eth* appear in about the proportion of ten to one

to those in *-s*. Some of the cases which have been counted as 3 sing. may be 3 pl. with the same ending. In the face of grammatical confusion in dependent clauses where the verb is removed some distance from its subject, it is difficult in all cases to determine which number the writer had in mind, since he uses the two endings for both sing. and pl. Of the thirty-five instances where the *-s* ending occurs twenty-one are furnished by the verb *saye(n)* (*saith, seith* occurs twenty-four times; *sait* once). *teches, sekes, leues, brekes, shewes, lettes, dwelles* also appear. The ending is *-t* in *happet, sendet, spillit, kepit, oppressit, and semet*.

The 3 pl. furnishes the only examples of plurals in *-s*. Of eighteen such cases fourteen are furnished by the verb *do*. The plural ending is otherwise *-e, -en*. There are forty-seven 3 pl. in *-e, -en*.

The imper. is sing.—, *e, -eth(e)*; pl. *-eth(e), -uth*. There is no imper. in *-(e)s*.

The pres. part. ends in *-inge, -ynge, -yn*. There is no instance of the Northern *-and*.

The past part. of weak verbs ends in *-ede, -d, -id, -ud, -de, -(e)t(e), -eth(e)*; of strong verbs, *-en, -on*. The preservation of the *-n* in the strong verb is a characteristic of the early Northern dialect, where the past part. had dropped the prefix. In the South the *-n* fell off in the fourteenth century, while the prefix was preserved. Still, the retained *-n* was the rule in the London language in the second quarter of the fourteenth century (Morsbach, *Schriftsprache*, 142). The prefix is employed here in a few instances; it appears as *y, i-*.

#### DIALECT.

Fortunately, we are not compelled to depend upon the extremely precarious test of dialect to determine the home of the writer of this ms. This information is furnished by the scribe himself. At the time when this ms. was written Middle English dialects were confused in their writing to such an extent that very little dependence can be placed upon the tests generally set up for the determination of dialects at an earlier date. It is at once apparent, however, from the summary of the phonology and grammar given above that, so far as these tests can be applied, the basis of the dialect is East Midland,<sup>1</sup> which

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<sup>1</sup> Such forms as *-us, -ud, -ut*, frequent enough in this ms., are given by Morsbach

had at this date practically come to be the prevailing form of writing for all dialects.<sup>1</sup>

Midland characteristics of the writing are:—1) OE *ā* = *ō*; 2) WS *ēa* (breaking) = *ō*; 3) OE *hw-* = *wh-*; 4) OE *sč* = *sch*; 5) OE *č* is palatalized; 6) the verbal system exhibits a predominating number of Midland forms; 7) the pronoun shows *hem* and *here* for *þam* and *þeire*.

Northern are:—1) OE *ā* = *ā*; 2) WS *ēa* (breaking) = *ā*; 3) OE *sč* = *s-* in *sall*; 4) OE *č* is unpalatalized; 5) the verbal system employs the present indicative suffix *-s*, and the past part. *-it* (Cf. Morsbach, *Grammatik*, 7). But the following distinctive Northern characteristics are wanting:—1) *qu-* for *wh-*; 2) *-cht* for *ȝt*; 3) present part. in *-ande*; 4) the demonstrative pron. *þā*, *þās*; 5) insertion of *i*, *y* to indicate the length of preceding vowel *ā*, *ē*, *ō*. Furthermore, specific Northern words are sparingly found:—*gar* and *ded* each once, *pick* (“pitch”) twice, and *till* three times; *kirk*, *at*, *barn*, *hende*, *samen* are not used.

There are, indeed, a few characteristic Southern writings:—1) *w-* for *wh-*; 2) OE *y* = *u* in four instances; 3) OE *f* = *v* initially once.

It is no easy task to draw dogmatic conclusions in regard to peculiarities of English dialects in the fifteenth century, a time when everything was linguistically unsettled and uncertain. It is difficult to say how far a Northern scribe was influenced by the manner of writing in the Midland district lying near him, or to judge accurately the weight that the rising standard language had with a friar of Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the second quarter of the fifteen century.

In view of the preponderant Midland coloring of the writing in this text, together with the unavoidable assumption that the ms. is a copy, the conclusion naturally lies that the original from which John Lacy copied was an earlier Midland ms. In copying, the Northern scribe followed fairly faithfully the writing of the original, altering the text into the manner of his own writing in no methodical fashion, with little care, seemingly, as to which form he wrote.

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(*Grammatik*, 7) as characteristic of West Midland in contrast to the *-es*, *-ed*, *-et* of East Midland. This variation of vowel in the unstressed syllable is so widespread even in the fourteenth century that no dependence can be placed upon it as a dialectic criterion.

<sup>1</sup>Emerson, *History of the English Language*, 79.









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